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Sébastien Faure

Libertarian Communism

1903

Retrieved on March 2, 2011 from www.marxists.org

Source: Sébastien Faure, *Reponse aux paroles d'une croyante*.

Oyonnax, Imprimerie Ouvrière, 1903;

Translated : for marxists.org by Mitch Abidor.

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Libertarian Communism

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Your heart is filled with pity and sadness by the spectacle of the miseries that overwhelm humanity, by the perplexities and vicissitudes that torment it.

Mine is as well. What, then, are you doing about it, Mademoiselle?

Like all those who *believe in* the necessity and the fatedness of the institutions that rule us, you don't think of questioning whether or not this collection of evils under the weight of which humans groan can be imputed to these same institutions. And without reflecting you doubtless address yourself to those who combat them, who condemn them and work to substitute other social arrangements, and you call on them to renounce the evil work they are accomplishing. I am, Mademoiselle, one of these evil workers, and in my propaganda work I responded to you, giving the reasons that I have the pretension of considering decisive.

I said:

God is error, and I no longer believe in him; God is a lie and hypocrisy, and I combat him; God is religion, and not only does this not console me, but

it is an affliction; not only does it not bring humanity tranquility and joy, but it has written the most painful and bloody pages of history, and this is why I fight against religion.

I said:

Patriotism is the new dogma. On the ruins of the old Credos that are collapsing, it is the new faith; necessary to the masters so they can preserve the chains they've forged for the slaves.

Patriotism is an unreasoning and stupid hatred of everything that isn't part of the fatherland.

Patriotism is the barracks, it's the army, and it's the proletariat in uniform massacring, for the benefit and under the orders of the capitalist class, the proletariat in work shirts.

Patriotism is the need for revenge imposing itself on vanquished nations and converting our planet into a gigantic battlefield where the combat will never end.

This is why I make war on war; this is why, worker for life and not for death, I am an internationalist and call for the dismissal of armies and preach universal peace.

I said:

Love is, by its very nature subject to whims; it's capricious, electric. It is madness to want to submit it to fixed rules applicable to all. Philosophically, liberty is the sole regime to which it can adapt itself.

In practice marriage gives deplorable results. Far from being a guarantee of concord and happiness, it gives birth to the worst forms of hypocrisy and the most sorrowful situations.

A chain always useless and dangerous; a chain always intolerable, it must be smashed.

All children suffer because of the family, some because they have one, others because they don't.

For these reasons I stigmatize marriage and the vain formalities that surround it. I swear by the imminent and necessary destruction of the juridical family based on cupidity and which must be replaced by the great human family, resting on the solid arising of all individual interests.

I gave each of these considerations the development I consider necessary.

* * *

And now, mademoiselle, I conclude.

Sad, very sad is the life lived by the current generations. And yet, the motive force of all human actions is the search for some kind of satisfaction, and society's ideal is the realization of the greatest amount of happiness for all.

Religion, Property, Fatherland, the Family — beliefs and institutions that all proceed from the principle of authority — have made and still make of history a centuries long painful and bloody drama.

This drama, by perpetuating the ignorance that alone engenders it, you, unknowingly, want to prolong.

This drama I want, with all the ardor of my will, to put an early end to.

And to this end I employ all my strength for the demolition of all authoritarian Bastilles: government, capitalism, religion, the army, parliament, the magistracy, the police, the family.

This is the first part of my task.

But man isn't made to live among the ruins. His spirit is not only nourished by negation, his heart is not only made for hatred.

And it is here that appears the necessity for the construction that must follow the ruins: affirmations flowing from the very negations, love surging forth from hatred.

The social body suffers in all its parts: in its stomach, in its brain, in its heart. It's dying of misery. The misery of the stomach is hunger; the misery of spirits is ignorance; the misery of hearts is hatred.

This triple monster must be brought down.

The remedy has been found: libertarian communism.

Through it each will find, in the immense material treasury maintained by the common effort, all they need to satisfy their physical needs.

Through it, each will find, in the endless intellectual treasury fed by the incessant work of spirits at labor, all they need to satisfy their scientific appetite, their artistic tastes.

Through it each will find in the unfailing affective treasury, constantly enriched by the need to love, all they need to calm their thirst for tenderness.

Libertarian communism, by which all stomachs, all brains, and all hearts can be and shall be liberated, this is the remedy.

This remedy is applicable, but it is not yet sufficiently known. It is thus necessary to vulgarize it. I am one of its vulgarizers and nothing else. And this fully suffices for my activity and my ambition.

— *Sebastien Faure*